



New Internationalist
The people, the ideas, the action in the fight for global justice

Syrian refugees around the world

Pre-Intermediate
New Internationalist
Easier English ready lesson



- **Speaking**



Do this quiz in pairs:

- 1. What % of the Syrian people have had to leave their homes?** (a) 10% (b) 50% (c) 90%
- 2. What % of Syrian refugees came to live in EU countries before July 2014?** (a) 4% (b) 14% (c) 40%
- 3. Which countries support President Assad?** (a) *Russia and USA* (b) *Turkey and Iran* (c) *Iran and Russia*
- 4. Which countries support the rebels against President Assad?** (a) *Saudi Arabia and Iran?* (b) *the USA and Turkey* (c) *Saudi Arabia and the USA*
- 5. When did the Red Cross decide the civil war in Syria started?** (a) *March 2011* (b) *July 2011* (c) *July 2012*

Now check your answers on the infographic



Syrian conflict

The facts

Death toll
240,000 Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) estimate, July 2015

Political prisoners
Arrests recorded by the Violations Documentation Center: **61,811**
Estimated number of people detained by regime, 2014¹: **150,000**

Over 11,000 Syrians killed in regime prisons by torture, starvation and execution²

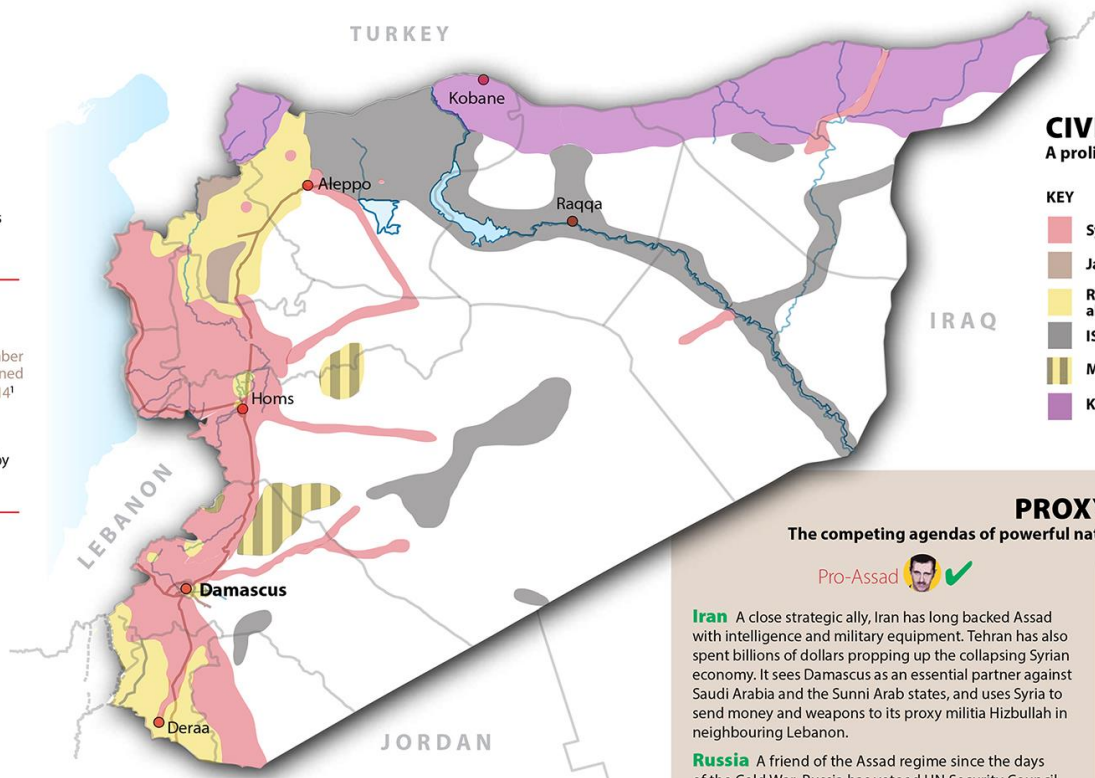
Humanitarian crisis
50% of Syria's population displaced by conflict
7.6 million internally displaced and **4 million** refugees

12.2 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria³

4% the share of Syrian refugees hosted by EU countries⁴

640,200 people are trapped in besieged locations within Syria⁵

2,157 Syrians have drowned trying to reach Europe. 75% were women and children⁶



CIVIL WAR⁷

A proliferation of armed actors has partitioned the country

- KEY**
- Syrian armed forces and allied militias
 - Jabhat al-Nusra (JaN) – an Islamist group affiliated to al-Q
 - Rebel forces – an affiliation of the Free Syrian Army and allied groups
 - ISIS – Islamist group attacking both regime and rebel forces
 - Mixed – areas where rebels, ISIS and JaN all have influence
 - Kurdish fighters

PROXY WAR

The competing agendas of powerful nations have deepened the conflict in Syria

Pro-Assad

Iran A close strategic ally, Iran has long backed Assad with intelligence and military equipment. Tehran has also spent billions of dollars propping up the collapsing Syrian economy. It sees Damascus as an essential partner against Saudi Arabia and the Sunni Arab states, and uses Syria to send money and weapons to its proxy militia Hezbollah in neighbouring Lebanon.

Russia A friend of the Assad regime since the days of the Cold War, Russia has vetoed UN Security Council resolutions that might have led to military intervention against the Syrian regime. It has also armed Assad.

Hizbullah Like its backer, Iran, Hizbullah supported Assad from the start. The Shi'a militia has stepped up support since 2013, when its leader, Hassan Nasrallah, publicly acknowledged that his men were fighting in Syria.

Anti-Assad

Turkey An early opponent of the regime, Turkey hosted, trained and equipped the Free Syrian Army in the summer of 2011 and, more recently, joined with Saudi Arabia in increasing military aid to the rebels.

Saudi Arabia Saudi Arabia is supporting the rebels, including some Islamist groups. Its hostility to Assad is tied to a long-standing opposition to Iranian influence in the region. In March 2015, King Salman hosted a meeting at which leaders from Turkey, Qatar and other Gulf nations agreed to work together to funnel weapons and cash to rebels.

US Initially pledged support for the rebels, and in 2013 came close to military intervention against Assad. Since the rise of ISIS, however, the US has focused its attention on attacking the jihadis.

TIMELINE

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<p>March Inspired by the Arab Spring, schoolboys in Deraa graffiti anti-regime slogans. Their subsequent arrest and torture sparks peaceful protests calling for reform.</p> <p>President Bashar al-Assad announces conciliatory measures while security forces repeatedly open fire on unarmed protesters.</p>	<p>January Jabhat al-Nusra, an al-Qaeda affiliate, announces its formation in Syria</p> <p>February Government steps up the bombardment of Homs and other cities. The UN says more than 7,500 Syrians have now been killed.</p> <p>May Regime massacres more than 100 civilians, including 49 children, in Houla, near Homs. Britain, Canada, Australia and other countries expel Syrian diplomats.</p>	<p>March Syrian refugees number 1 million.</p> <p>April Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announces the formation of ISIS. Conflict breaks out between the two main Islamist jihadi groups, ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra.</p> <p>July The regime begins the siege of Yarmouk, a Palestinian refugee camp in Damascus. Hundreds of civilians will die of disease or starvation.</p>	<p>January-February UN-brokered peace talks in Geneva break down. UN resolution demands an end to the indiscriminate bombing of civilians. Regime intensifies barrel-bombing campaign over coming months. Human Rights Watch concludes that the Assad regime has dropped bombs containing chlorine gas on civilian areas.</p>	<p>January With help of US-led airstrikes, Kurdish forces retake Kobane.</p> <p>June UN reports that indiscriminate attacks on civilian-inhabited areas are committed across Syria 'by most, if not all, of the warring parties'.</p>

Which countries do all the Syrian refugees go to? And why?



What do you think it's like to go to these places as a refugee?

a) Calais, France:



b) Lesbos, Greece



c) Lebanon



d) Thailand



Match:

1/ aid

2/ humanity

3/ on alternate days

4/ paramedic

5/ resettlement

6/ democracy

7/ monarchy

8/ coup d'état

9/ 12-hour shift

10/ fake

a) one day yes, one day no

b) work for a period of 12 hours

c) not real eg. a passport

d) not a fully qualified doctor, but trained to do medical work

e) money and other help eg. in charity work

f) when a king or queen governs a country

g) when all people vote to choose the government of a country

h) caring about other humans

i) when a group takes over control of a government and country

j) moving to live in a different place

Jigsaw reading – A and B will read
different stories

**Task 1: 2 minute scan – find 2
problems the refugees have, then
compare with your partner**

A) “Syrian refugees in Bangkok”:

[http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/Syrian refugees in Bangkok](http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/Syrian_refugees_in_Bangkok)

**B) “A village in Lebanon that takes more
Syrian refugees than Britain in a year”:**

[http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/A village in Lebanon that takes more Syrian refugees than Britain](http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/A_village_in_Lebanon_that_takes_more_Syrian_refugees_than_Britain)

Reading task 2

(A and B reading different stories)

Now you have 10 minutes to read more slowly.

Find information about:

- 1/ how many Syrian refugees go there
- 2/ why Syrian refugees go there
- 3/ schools for refugee children
- 4/ how refugees get money to survive there
- 5/ any other problems refugees have there

Then A and B compare

Speaking

1/ In pairs or groups (of As and Bs), **plan and practise a 3 – 5 minute radio programme** about Syrian refugees going to Thailand and Lebanon.

2/ **Record or perform** your radio programme.

3/ **Listen** to the other groups' programmes and **discuss** how they could be better.



Homework:

Read and discuss more
Easier English articles about
Syria and the refugee crisis:

http://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/Issue_485

